



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Public Hearing Report Following Review of Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. “Vault Pit Expansion” Project Proposal**

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – April 18, 2016 – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or the Board) has completed its review of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (AEM)’s Vault Pit Expansion Project Proposal (amendment to the existing Meadowbank Gold Mine Project) and reconsideration of the relevant terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 004, and has submitted its Public Hearing Report, including recommendations, to the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs for her review and decision.

After a thorough review of the potential ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts of the proposed Project, the Board has concluded that the Vault Pit Expansion Project may proceed, in accordance with the Board’s recommendations for including revised terms and conditions into the existing Meadowbank Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 004.

The Meadowbank Gold Mine is located in the Kivalliq Region approximately 70 km north of the Hamlet of Baker Lake on Inuit-owned surface lands. The currently-approved project components include: the Meadowbank mine site (main mine site); Vault mine site; marshalling facilities in Baker Lake; and a 110 km all weather access road connecting the Hamlet of Baker Lake with the Meadowbank mine site. The main mine site is comprised of: camp facilities, mill, maintenance and waste management facilities, fuel tank farm, airstrip, and active mine areas including the Goose pit (mining ended early 2015) and the Portage pits. The Vault mine site consists of: a maintenance shop, shelter/refuge facility, waste rock storage facility, water management facilities, and haul roads. After a careful review of the original project proposal, in December 2006, the Board recommended that the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project be allowed to proceed in accordance with 86 recommended terms and conditions, which then became the basis for NIRB Project Certificate No. 004.

On July 28, 2014 AEM wrote to the Board to advise that due to economic reasons it was proposing changes to the Meadowbank Gold Mine to allow for expansion of Vault Pit operations into Phaser Lake, noting that this could require changes to specific terms and conditions within Project Certificate No. 004. The proposed project amendment included the expansion of the Vault Pit to develop two small extensions know as Phaser Pit and the BB Phaser Pit, which is an extension of the Vault Pit deposit. These two small open pits would extend from the perimeter of Vault Pit to the southwest into Phaser Lake. The Vault Pit

Expansion Project proposal includes the expected extraction of an additional 269,438 tonnes (t) of ore from Phaser Pit and 132,950 t from BB Phaser Pit. This would be in addition to the current approved production of approximately 29.8 million tonnes (Mt) and 10.7 Mt of ore from the entire Meadowbank mine pits and the Vault Pit, respectively, over the life of the mine. AEM further proposed construction and operation of additional haul roads connecting the new pits to Vault Pit infrastructure; water diversion and management activities; dewatering and fish-out of Phaser Lake; and eventual re-flooding of Phaser Pit and BB Phaser Pit along Vault Pit.

Although there is no specific process prescribed for the Board to conduct a reconsideration under Article 12, Part 8, section 12.8.2 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, given the nature and scope of the proposed changes, the NIRB chose to undertake a public technical review, conducting community information sessions and a public hearing in the community most likely to be affected by the proposal (Baker Lake) as part of the assessment of the Vault Pit Expansion Project Proposal.

The Board heard from Intervenors during the reconsideration process that there were no outstanding technical issues or concerns with the proposed project amendments provided that AEM followed the mitigation measures described within its original Final Environmental Impact Statement and within the Addendum. At the Public Hearing, members of the potentially affected communities of Baker Lake and Chesterfield Inlet posed questions about various topics including the fishout program, dewatering techniques, dust and dust mitigation measures along the all-weather access road and the potential for the Vault Pit Expansion to further impact traditional use, access to hunting areas and traditional hunting trail(s).

In completing the Board's review of the Project, the NIRB considered the information contained within the original Final Environmental Impact Statement and the FEIS Addendum filed by Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, as well as the written and verbal comments, information requests and final written submissions filed by federal, territorial and local governments, designated Inuit organizations and members of the public throughout the course of the reconsideration process. The NIRB also carefully considered comments, and advice from community representatives, members of the public and formal intervenors throughout the Review process.

The Public Hearing Report, which includes an executive summary, is available from the NIRB's online public registry at the following location:

<http://ftp.nirb.ca/03-MONITORING/03MN107-MEADOWBANK%20GOLD%20MINE/01-PROJECT%20CERTIFICATE/05-AMENDMENTS/02-VAULT%20EXPANSION-CONDITION%2048/09-DECISION/>.

A translated version of the Report will be prepared in Inuktitut and French, and will be posted on the online public registry as soon as it becomes available.

During the Board's assessment of the Project, the Board benefitted enormously from all those participants who shared their experiences, knowledge and Inuit Qaujimaningit with the Board. The NIRB is grateful to all who contributed over the last year and a half year to the Board's

Review, and the Public Hearing Report and associated recommendations reflect these vital contributions to our process.

If the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs accepts the NIRB's report and agrees with the Board's conclusion that the Vault Pit Expansion Project can proceed, the NIRB looks forward to continuing to work with all parties to update the existing monitoring program for the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project that will provide oversight and ensure the Addendum complies with the specific terms and conditions of the Board's Project Certificate.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Copland  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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